



**RHODE ISLAND WORKING FAMILIES PARTY**

Representative Marvin Abney, Chair

House Committee on Finance

Tuesday, March 13, 2021

**Support for H-5929 and Budget Article 12 Section 8d, Relating to Doula Services**

Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

I write in support of Representative Ranglin-Vassell's bill, H-5929, providing support for low-income women to have the services of a doula at the birth of their children. I also write in support of Budget Article 12 Section 8d.

The research is clear. The services of a doula as a companion and advocate during birth improves the outcome for mothers and babies. It also lowers the frequency of pricier medical interventions, including C-sections.

In 2019, I had a baby and spent much of my pregnancy reading about what to do to improve the birth experience. There is a lot to read, but few things you can actually do that have more impact than hiring a doula. My husband and I decided to spend a significant amount of money on doing just that—more than our hospital co-payment, more than childbirth class, even more than we spent on baby gear. In the end, our doula was the person we trusted most in the room in what turned out to be a chaotic and confusing birth. It was well worth our money.

Of course, the women who need these services the most can least afford them. That is where this bill comes in.

Giving women on Medicaid access to this critical, proven service is a matter of gender, economic, and racial justice. Those are core values of the Working Families Party. We strongly urge this Committee and the House to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Georgia Hollister Isman  
New England Regional Director  
Working Families Party